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FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1802
INFO RUEHOR/AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY 0199
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0503
RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 2053

S E C R E T MASERU 000015

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/10/2016

TAGS: ASEC PTER LT

SUBJECT: MASERU TERRORISM INFORMATION

REF: (A) MASERU-RSO EMAIL 1/6/06 (B) MASERU-RSO EMAIL 1/9/06 (C) AMB-RSO TELCON 1/10/06

CLASSIFIED BY: JUNE CARTER PERRY, AMBASSADOR, EXEC, STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (c)

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¶1. (S/NF) On January 6, Post Security Officer was advised by a cleared American employee that a "good acquaintance" had claimed to her that people who work at or own a pizza restaurant "Mediterranean" in downtown Maseru are heavily associated with Middle-East terrorism. The term "Al-Qaida" was used. As requested by the individual who passed the information to her, the U.S. employee would not reveal that person's name. The employee described the person as very frightened. PSO advised DCM and Ambassador and sent report to RSO (ref A) with request for advice on next steps.

¶2. (S/NF) Related to this incident is the fact that an Amcit Peace Corps contract employee (medical officer) recently and suddenly married the owner of the restaurant. The owner's name is "Magida" and he is Tunisian. PSO was advised that since the PC employee is on contract, she did not require a clearance for the marriage.

¶3. (S/NF) Ambassador followed up with RSO Gaborone (ref B) upon his return to post to express interest in a visit. RSO has scheduled January 27 trip to Maseru to conduct interviews. COM met with American Embassy employee January 9 regarding her conversation with the "acquaintance" whom the employee characterized as possibly blowing "hot air." Employee also indicated that Middle Easterners own many businesses in Lesotho including in Maseru and in Mafeteng to the south. Ambassador also met with PC security officer January 10 and he confirmed that the PC contractor had, to PC's knowledge, married quickly and surprised those around her. The PC security officer said he had followed procedure and had spoken with the contractor who according to him, "fit a profile" of some American women in this situation.

¶4. (S/NF) In January 10 telcon with RSO, COM asked if visit to post could be made earlier than January 27 in order for RSO to meet with Embassy employee and Peace Corps contractor but it was indicated that January 27 would be the first available opportunity. RSO also stated that his offices in the Department did not have any reason to believe organizations such as Al-Qaida existed in Lesotho. Comment: Post reported to Washington in (05 Maseru 523) that the South African High Commissioner had expressed his government's concern that Al-Qaida operatives had moved across the border into Lesotho. End Comment.

¶5. (S/NF) Post wishes to have full investigation and interviews conducted as quickly and thoroughly as possible to assess credibility of information passed and to ensure all measures

have been taken to provide for the safety and security of all USG employees as well as the two who have contacts with the individual informant or a family member.

PERRY